GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2530
ANSWERED ON:04.12.2002
PIO CARDS
A.P. JITHENDER REDDY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have decided to issue cards to the `Persons of Indian Origin` (PIO);

(b) if so, the details thereof together with the benefits to be extended to the PIO Card holders;

(c) the details of requests received by the Government from different diplomatic Missions in this regard, country-wise;

(d) whether adequate safeguards from security angle have been taken into consideration before such cards are issued; and

(e) if so, the details thereof ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)
(a) Yes.
(b) The Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) Card Scheme was originally introduced with effect from 30-03-1999Based on the feedback received from the various quarters, the modified PIO Card Scheme has come into effect from 15-09-2002. Under this scheme the fee is Rs. 15,000 and the PIO Card is valid for 15 years. Benefits available to PIO Card holders are as follows:

(i) A PIO Card holder shall not require a separate visa to visit India.

(ii) A PIO Card holder will be exempt from the requirement of registration if his/her stay on any single visit in India does not exceed 180 days.

(iii)In the event of continuous stay in India of the PIO Card holder exceeding 180 days, he/she shall have to get himself/herself registered within 30 days of the expiry of 180 days with the concerned Foreigners Regional Registration Officer/Foreigners Registration Officer.

(iv) All PIO Card holders shall enjoy parity with NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) in respect of all facilities available to the latter in the economic, financial and educational fields except in matters relating to the acquisition of agricultural/plantation properties. No parity shall be allowed in the sphere of political rights.
(c) Since the modified scheme has come into operation only with effect from 15th September, 2002, no data has yet been received.
(d) Yes.
(e) The PIO Card issuing authorities issue the PIO Card after usual security checks.